

January 7, 2022

The Honorable Lloyd Austin  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin:

I write to highlight the importance of U.S. bilateral security cooperation with Brazil, and the need to expand these activities, including efforts to counter the growing influence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the Western Hemisphere.

Brazil is an important U.S. ally and security partner with key capabilities that is willing to work shoulder-to-shoulder with our forces to ensure the security and stability of the southern Atlantic Ocean and the broader region. As such, I strongly urge you to prioritize and pursue options to expand this relationship and support initiatives to make the region safer from the CCP's malign influence. As we have seen many times, this influence includes corruption, vaccine extortion, deceitful lending practices, party-to-party training, environmental threats, and challenges to sovereignty.

In recent years, the U.S. has expanded our joint exercises and trainings in the region with great success, including last month's Southern Vanguard 22 exercise to increase interoperability. For decades, the Brazilian Army's airborne component has worked with our forces, and Brazil was the only country in South America to send forces to Europe to join the Allies in World War II. Carrying on this tradition, the Brazilian Army was the first South American company-sized element to train at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), and intends to do so again in the near future.

The Brazilian government has been a strong supporter of expanding the strategic alliance between our two countries. Brazil has also been a reliable partner in defending democracy and human rights in the region, assisting Venezuelan refugees, and countering malign actors in the hemisphere.

General Laura Richardson's recent visit to the country is a good first step in maintaining and expanding our close ties with Brazil during her tenure as Commander of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), but there is more the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) can and should be doing to foster this relationship.

I appreciate the work that SOUTHCOM and the DoD have put into maintaining this relationship over the years, and I remain committed to supporting additional efforts in any way I can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a stylized, cursive script.

Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator

CC: General Laura Richardson, Commander, U.S. Southern Command